

The Pocahontas Times

ANDREW PRICE, EDITOR

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That we will shortly know that lengthened breath - Is not the sweetest gift God gives His friend, And that sometimes this sable pall of death Conceals the fairest boon his love can send.

THE Washington Post says that a Virginia negro choked himself to death on his Christmas dinner of possum and sweet potatoes. It was a happy death.

WM. H. SAWYERS, editor of the Hinton Independent-Herald, is forever calling us the "Sermonette Editor." We take this opportunity of telling him that our highest ambition is to be able to see "sermons in stones and books in running brooks."

THE law of the redemption of land sold for taxes is very similar to that set forth in the book of Leviticus: "If thy brother grow poor and sell some of his possessions... a dwelling house in a walled city, he shall have the right of redemption for a whole year after it has been sold; for a year he shall retain the right of redemption.

THERE are numerous applicants for the office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court, made vacant by the death of the late O. S. Long. The office pays from \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year, and addition the clerk has the privilege of printing records which are not otherwise ordered to be printed by the attorney.

THE courtesy of the Democratic Editors of the 8th Senatorial District to each other surpasses understanding. We have been urging one another to become the next State Senator. To complete the list the Independent-Herald names the Editor of the Pocahontas Times.

AS THE year opens up the anxious attention of the civilized world is fixed upon the rapid and bewildering events transpiring in the far east, prognostic of very startling results in the destiny of the Chinese empire and Korea. The Chinese, however, seem to be as much disturbed at the prospect of the coming eclipse of the sun, January 22, as the Ninevites were by the appearance of Jonah.

THE BOGUS PREACHER.

Rev John A. Ratliff in Jail for Stealing a Horse.

Rev John A. Ratliff will be Prevented by Force of Circumstances from Filling Any Appointments Made by Him.—His next Sermon Will Be Delivered Before a Congregation of Twelve, from the Text: "A Horse is a Vain Thing for Safety."—Ps. 34

Henry Dawson and E. F. Beard, of Alvon, Greenbrier County, arrived here New Year's day with the sham evangelist and placed him in jail on the charge of stealing J. W. Miller's horse, at Academy. The circumstances connected with the arrest are interesting.

THE prisoner admitted having taken the horse. He was brought up for preliminary examination, and secured N. C. McNeil as counsel. He waived examination and was committed to jail to await the pleasure of the grand jury next April.

THE Prisoner. Ratliff gives his age as 38. He has an evil face. He says that he lost his hand in a cotton-gin, in Kansas. He is thought to be from Southern West Virginia, or Kentucky, from the Big Sandy River. He claimed to be an evangelist of the M. E. Church, South, and says that he has baptized 625 converts since August 3d. Dawson says his prisoner told him that he had an appointment to preach at Graham Chapel, Mercer County, January 16. He gave his name as Graham to the officers, as well as the name Ratliff. On his way back he got outside of an alarming quantity of whiskey for a minister.

Henry Dawson, the head of the posse which captured Ratliff, is such a striking and well-known character that this sketch would be incomplete without a few words devoted to him especially. He is the man who captured Kenos Douglas a few years ago, the man who had sworn he would never be taken alive. He has made numberless arrests, and his very appearance would strike terror to the heart of a criminal. He is tall and slim, with a steel-gray eye, a hatchet-face, and the kind of man who impresses the observer as being both fearless and over-powering. He was born in Kanawha County, and tho he looks not over thirty, is fifty-two years of age. He served in the Union army in Averill's corps.

HE is a politician of no mean note, on the Republican side of the house; and the Blue Spring district of Greenbrier, which turned from a strongly Democratic district to a Republican district last fall, is his bailiwick. He ascribes the cause to Dan O'Connell and himself, and he is a foe to free silver.

THE erring divine rose to his feet and shook hands with his visitor with the air of a Lord Chesterfield. He was poorly dressed. He is of medium height; round-shouldered; blue eyes; sandy mustache, hair thin on top of head; round, good-natured face; complexion marred by smallpox; talks fluently. His talk was something like this: "I am an old Confederate soldier and bore the colors of the 64th Virginia Regiment. Enlisted from Lee County; I was raised in Lee County, Virginia, and went to Kentucky after the war. I had the advantage of an early religious training, but was not converted until about eight years ago; was ordained five years ago by the Holstein Conference, Virginia. Was assigned a circuit for one year in Scott and Lee counties; after that I held a meeting on Beaver Creek last week, but had no conversions. The Lord blessed my work in Wyoming county last fall. At Wolf Pen I baptized 17; at Laurel Fork, 10; at Tug River, 13.

was taken and brought back to jail. He was tried and sentenced to three years in the penitentiary. At the same time another horse-thief was sentenced to two years. The judge remarked that as a preacher ought to set a better example than a layman he would give him one year longer.

In the home of a friend quite recently something was said about how Moses prayed "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Now one of the sources of practical wisdom is to observe how one life reacts upon all life. Bulwer puts the idea in this beautiful way:

"No stream from its source Flows seaward, how lonely soever its source, But what some heart is gladdened. No star ever rose And set without influence somewhere. Who knows What earth needs from earth's lowest creature? No life Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife, And all life not be purer and stronger thereby."

Seneca makes this contribution to the wisdom to which it would be well to apply our mind:

"There is none made so great but he may both need the help and service, and stand in fear of the power and unkindness, even of the meanest of mortals."

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